

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

establishing a radio link layer connection between a radio access network and a wireless communication device, wherein the radio access network applies a radio link timer to the radio link connection, wherein the radio access network provides connectivity with a packet-switched network to bridge voice-over-packet communications between the wireless communication device and one or more other devices;

establishing a data-link layer connection over which data can be communicated between the wireless communication device and the radio access network, wherein the wireless communication device includes a push-to-talk button;

detecting that the wireless communication device has neither sent nor received packet-based real-time media over the data-link layer connection for a threshold period of time; and

responsively sending from the wireless communication device into a radio access network at least one keepalive signal, wherein the at least one keepalive signal resets the radio link timer.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein sending at least one keepalive signal comprises periodically sending keepalive signals.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the radio access network imposes a radio-link timeout period, and wherein periodically sending keepalive signals comprises:

sending keepalive signals at a period that is shorter than the radio-link timeout period.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein, the wireless communication device communicates with the radio access network over a radio-link, and wherein sending at least one keepalive signal into the radio access network comprises:

sending keepalive signals into the radio-access network in order to hold open the radio link layer connection.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the keepalive signal, which is sent in response to detecting that the wireless communication device has neither sent nor received packet-based real time media, is an empty Real-time Transport Protocol (RTP) packet.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein the radio access network provides connectivity with a packet-switched network, and~~ wherein sending the keepalive signal into the radio access network comprises sending the keepalive signal into the radio access network for transmission, in turn, into the packet-switched network.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) A cellular mobile station comprising:

a push-to-talk button;

a processor; and

a wireless communication interface,

wherein the processor is programmed to make a determination that the cellular mobile station has neither send nor received real-time media over a data-link layer connection for a threshold period of time, and

wherein the processor is programmed to respond to the determination by sending at least one keepalive signal via the wireless communication interface into a radio access network, wherein the radio access network provides connectivity with a packet-switched network to bridge voice-over-packet communications between the cellular mobile station and one or more other stations,

whereby sending a keepalive signal from the cellular mobile station into the radio access network causes the radio access network to reset a radio-link timeout timer for a radio link assigned to the cellular mobile station.

10. (Original) The cellular mobile station of claim 9, wherein the processor is programmed to periodically send keepalive signals into the radio access network in response to the determination.

11. (Original) The cellular mobile station of claim 10, wherein the radio-link timeout timer has a timeout period, and wherein the processor is programmed to send the keepalive signals into the radio access network at a period that is shorter than the timeout period.

12. (Currently Amended) A communication system comprising:
a mobile station having a processor, data storage, a user interface, a push-to-talk button,
and a wireless communication interface;

a radio access network that communicates with the mobile station over an air interface and that provides connectivity between the mobile station and a packet-switched network to bridge voice-over-packet communications between the mobile station and one or more other stations, wherein the radio access network is arranged to establish a radio link layer connection with the mobile station over the air interface and to release the radio link layer connection after a predefined period of time during which no packet-data is communicated to or from the mobile station over the air interface, wherein the radio access network applies a radio link timer to the radio link connection;

wherein the mobile station is arranged to engage in packet-based real-time media communications over a data-link layer connection; and

wherein the mobile station is arranged (i) to detect that no packet-based real-time media has been communicated to or from the mobile station over the data-link layer connection for a threshold period of time that is less than the predefined period of time, and (ii) to responsively transmit packet-data as a keepalive signal over the air interface to reset the radio link timer.

13. (Original) The communication system of claim 12, wherein the packet-data that the mobile station transmits as a keepalive signal is an empty Real-time Transport Protocol (RTP) packet.

14. (Original) The communication system of claim 12, further comprising a communication server on the packet-switched network,

wherein the mobile station is arranged to send the packet-data as a keepalive signal to the communication server.

15. (Original) The communication system of claim 14, wherein the packet-data that the mobile station transmits as a keepalive signal is an empty Real-time Transport Protocol (RTP) packet.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein establishing the radio link layer connection comprises assigning the wireless communication device to operate on a particular traffic channel of an air interface.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein establishing a data-link layer connection comprises establishing a PPP session.